Department of State
Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) Notice of Funding Opportunity
(NOFO): FY 2016 Critical Language Scholarship Program
Announcement Type: New Cooperative Agreement
Funding Opportunity Number: ECA-ECAAS-16-002
Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number: 19.009
Key Date/Application Deadline: June 26, 2015

Program Description/Executive Summary:
The Office of Global Educational Programs of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs announces an open competition for the 2016 Critical Language Scholarship (CLS) Program, which provides foreign language instruction overseas for mixed cohorts of U.S. undergraduate and graduate students. The CLS Program is a component of the Department of State's engagement on expanding and diversifying U.S. study abroad through the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs' new U.S. Study Abroad Branch. Public and private non-profit organizations, or consortia of such organizations, meeting the provisions described in Internal Revenue Code section 26 USC 501(c)(3), may submit proposals to cooperate with the Bureau in the administration and implementation of one or both of the two components (Component A: Pre- and Post-Program Administration and Component B: Implementation of Institutes and Alumni Activities) available under this competition. Each component requires a separate proposal submission.

Pending the availability of FY 2016 funds, it is the Bureau's intent to award two or more cooperative agreements (one base year plus two non-competitive continuations) for an estimated total amount of $27 million, pending the availability of funding. Please see section B. Award Information below for additional details.

The program will be divided into two components.

Component A: Pre- and Post-Program Administration
The first component of this competition is for recruitment and selection of all U.S. participants for the CLS Program summer institutes worldwide, as well as oversight of alumni activities and organization of annual planning meetings. While the CLS Program is active in multiple countries, it is important to maintain a single worldwide program identity. Therefore, applicant organizations applying to administer programs for two or more language groups are required to submit a separate proposal for this component, demonstrating the capacity to conduct a nationwide participant recruitment and selection process for all language institutes, as well as ability to plan and oversee alumni activities and execute annual planning meetings. Only one organization will be selected to administer Component A: Pre- and Post-Program Administration.

Component B: Implementation of Institutes and Alumni Activities:
The second component is for the administration and implementation of summer institutes overseas, of no fewer than eight weeks in length, for participants in countries where Arabic, Bangla, Chinese (Mandarin), Hindi, Indonesian, Japanese, Korean, Persian, Punjabi, Russian, Swahili, Turkish and Urdu are widely spoken.

Pending the availability of FY 2016 funds, it is anticipated that the total amount of funding available for all FY 2016 administrative and program costs to support both program Component A: Pre- and Post-Program Administration and Component B: Implementation of Institutes and Alumni Activities, including all language groupings, outlined below will be $9,000,000. Applicant organizations applying to administer two or more language groups must submit a separate proposal not exceeding $400,000 for the recruitment and selection of all participants, execution of annual planning meetings, and oversight of all alumni activities (Component A). Applicant organizations may submit proposals requesting funds not exceeding $8,600,000 to implement the CLS institutes, for no less than 550 participants, between June and August 2016, as well as the execution of alumni activities (Component B).

Average participant costs per language group under Component B should not exceed $15,600 (includes program and administrative costs).

Eligible organizations or consortia may submit proposals for the administration and implementation of one or more of the following language groupings:
- Arabic language institutes in the Near East and North Africa region for not less than a total of 133 advanced beginning, intermediate and advanced students.
- Chinese, Indonesian, Japanese, and Korean language institutes in the East Asia and Pacific region for not less than a total of 189 beginning (Korean and Indonesian only), advanced beginning (Indonesian, Japanese, and Korean only), intermediate and advanced students.
- Russian and Turkish language institutes in the Europe region for not less than a total of 90 beginning (Turkish only), advanced beginning (Turkish only), intermediate and advanced students.
- Persian and Indic (Bangla, Hindi, Punjabi, and Urdu) language institutes in the South Central Asia region for not less than a total of 118 beginning (Indic languages only), advanced beginning, intermediate and advanced students.
- Swahili language institutes in the Africa region for not less than a total of 20 beginning, advanced beginning, intermediate and advanced students.

See section on "Country and Language Information" under "Administration and Implementation of Institutes" for additional information and a description of language levels.

These summer institutes should offer U.S. undergraduate and graduate students structured classroom instruction, as well as less formal interactive learning opportunities through a comprehensive exchange experience that primarily emphasizes language learning. Proposals from applicant organizations should demonstrate the development or expansion of institutional language-teaching capacity overseas for the CLS summer institutes and not propose enrolling participants in programs already in existence. This program is designed to also develop additional overseas language study opportunities for U.S. students.

A.   Program Description:

Overall grant making authority for this program is contained in the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961, Public Law 87-256, as amended, also known as the Fulbright-Hays Act. The purpose of the Act is "to enable the Government of the United States to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries...; to strengthen the ties which unite us with other nations by demonstrating the educational and cultural interests, developments, and achievements of the people of the United States and other nations...and thus to assist in the development of friendly, sympathetic and peaceful relations between the United States and the other countries of the world." The funding authority for the program above is provided through legislation.

Purpose:
The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) is supporting the participation of U.S. undergraduate and graduate students in intensive, substantive foreign language study to dramatically increase the number of Americans with linguistic proficiency in critical foreign languages, along with the acquisition of greater knowledge of the culture and perspectives of their host countries.

Global competencies, especially foreign language skills, are essential in engaging foreign governments and peoples, especially in critical world regions, in order to promote understanding, convey respect for other cultures, and encourage reform. These international skills are also fundamental to the global and economic competitiveness and security interests of our nation.

The goals of the CLS Program are:
- To develop a cadre of Americans with advanced linguistic skills and related cultural understanding who are able to advance international dialogue, and compete effectively in the global economy;
- To improve the ability of Americans to engage with the people of other countries in the language of the host country; and
- To develop additional overseas critical language study capacity for U.S. students.

In order to achieve these goals, the Bureau supports programs for U.S. undergraduate and graduate students to gain and improve language proficiency in Arabic, Bangla, Chinese (Mandarin), Hindi, Indonesian, Japanese, Korean, Persian, Punjabi, Russian, Swahili, Turkish and Urdu. ECA plans to issue a single award for recruitment and selection of all participants and oversight of alumni activities, including development and maintenance of an alumni database and one or more awards for the CLS program administration and implementation of summer institutes and execution of alumni activities. Organizations with expertise in one or more of the indicated languages may also seek partners in the other languages to submit a single proposal as a consortium.

Consortia submitting proposals must designate a lead institution to receive the award. The lead organization must submit a signed and dated consortium agreement (or letter of intent) with the proposal.

Other notes: The organization must inform the ECA program officer of its progress at each stage of the project's implementation in a timely fashion.

Component A: Pre- and Post- Program Administration

An applicant organization applying for two or more language groups must submit a separate proposal to conduct a nationwide competition for participants, which includes recruiting, screening, and selecting U.S. citizen undergraduate and graduate students for the program. Funding requested in a proposal for this element should not exceed $400,000, pending the availability of FY 2016 funds.

Recruitment:
Applicant organizations for Component A should propose a comprehensive outreach plan to publicize and recruit for the program at U.S. colleges and universities nationwide. Special attention should be paid to the recruitment of eligible students from Minority-Serving Institutions and community colleges. Applicant organizations should propose ideas to ensure diversity of participation. Information about the overall CLS Program and specific institutes, along with all accompanying application materials, should be posted online on a dedicated CLS website, as determined in consultation with ECA.

The Bureau requests that student applicants use an online application system. The recipient will need to develop an online application system or use an existing system and will be responsible for managing the entire online application process. An alternate paper-based application should also be provided for candidates unable to apply online. These paper-based applications, however, must be entered into the online system by the award recipient's program staff. All application materials should be available in a sortable, searchable, electronically accessible database format that can be easily shared with the Bureau upon request.

Selection:
Selected participants should show strong evidence of ability to succeed in an intensive group-based language study program, ability to adapt to new environments, and should represent the diversity of the United States. Diversity may include, but is not restricted to, geographic location, ethnicity and physical abilities. Selected students should also represent diversity of institutional type and fields of study, a balance between genders, and a balance between undergraduate and graduate students, to the extent possible. Preference should be given to candidates with limited or no previous study overseas. Selected students should be 18 years old and have completed at least their first year of undergraduate study by the summer of 2016. Selected students should demonstrate the intention and ability to continue their language study beyond the grant project period and apply their critical language skills later in their academic and professional careers. The students' language skills at the start of the institute should meet the requirements for each language outlined in Component B.

ECA will approve the selection plan for candidates, as well as the selection of both finalists and alternates for the program.

Applicant organizations should propose a selection process that meets the criteria outlined above.

Publicity:
The proposal must describe how the CLS Program will be publicized to colleges and universities, relevant organizations, and media outlets, including print, online, and broadcast, to reach the widest possible audience of qualified students. The applicant organization should also describe the response to and management of a significant volume of queries and applications. The award recipient will also work closely with ECA to publicize the achievements of the students attending these institutes. The applicant organization should provide information on successful media outreach campaigns it has conducted in the past. Please refer to POGI guidelines for additional guidance.

Other notes: All materials and correspondence related to this program will state that it is a program of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the U.S. Department of State. ECA will retain copyright use of and be allowed to distribute materials related to this program as it sees fit.

Oversight of Annual Planning Meetings:
The award recipient will be responsible for convening a one and half day kick-off meeting at the start of the award, for key personnel staff of all CLS implementing organizations and ECA staff. The meeting will give ECA an opportunity to outline expectations for the program and implementing partners to develop consistency across the program.

Additionally, the organization will be responsible for three-day planning meeting for all overseas institute directors and relevant ECA staff. This planning meeting should occur in Washington, DC in early January and be planned in close consultation with ECA and any other award recipients.

This planning meeting is intended to develop common elements and consistency of standards across all CLS Program institutes. Among the agenda items will be presentations by ECA staff, including on Department of State foreign policy priorities as relevant to the planning and execution of the CLS Program. Recruitment and selection of all participants, managing expectations and understanding student cultural identities should also be presented. Issues related to student placement, testing, and evaluation should also be discussed.

Oversight of Alumni Activities:
Alumni activities are an important component of ECA's exchange programs. Alumni programming in the form of career-focused networking events and webinars provides critical program follow-on and maximizes and extends the benefit of the participants'

program. The award recipient is responsible for creating and maintaining an alumni database to track all alumni across the CLS program. Additionally the organization is responsible for developing and proposing innovative ideas for alumni follow on activities. The applicant organization must indicate a designated staff member to oversee alumni activities, in coordination with Component B award recipient (s) who will oversee the execution of all alumni activities. The award recipient will also work in coordination with the Component B award recipient (s) to report to ECA on outcomes and effectiveness related to all alumni activities and to administer an annual longitudinal alumni survey throughout the period of the cooperative agreement, as well as providing information on aggregate data and outcomes of the survey. The award recipient will work with ECA on other overarching alumni activities as determined by ECA. Please refer to the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) and Project Objectives Goals Implementation (POGI) for additional guidance on alumni outreach and follow-on engagement.

Component B: Implementation of Institutes and Alumni Activities
Through the CLS Program institutes, U.S. undergraduate and graduate students will spend no less than eight weeks on programs abroad in the summer of 2016. The CLS Program should provide a minimum of 20 hours a week of intensive language instruction in a classroom setting, and should also provide language-learning opportunities through immersion in the cultural, social, and educational life of the host country. The program should enhance the participants' knowledge of the host country's history, culture, and political system as this knowledge supports language learning. Language study must be the primary focus of the program.

The applicant organizations are also encouraged to propose on a pilot basis an optional, specialized course focused on a topical area of study, such as public health, climate change, energy, or economic issues, as part of one or more language institutes. The course would combine language learning and the topical area of study as it relates to the region and/or country the institute is located in. This component will be optional for students and students would have to indicate an interest in enrolling on their application. Applicant organizations should suggest what location (s) makes the most sense based on the capacity of the overseas host organization or university to offer the topical area of study. As only a few institutes will be selected to offer the topical area of study option as a pilot, all applicants should also be prepared to implement their proposed institute without this component.

The language study experience should be as close to "full immersion" as possible during the program. Students should also take a "language pledge" and be held accountable to that pledge, to ensure their commitment to language study and practice during the duration of the institute.

Applicant organizations should submit a proposal for administration of one or more of the language groups. Funding requested in proposals for the implementation of all

language groups should not exceed $8,600,000. Average participant costs per language group should not exceed $15,600(includes program and administrative costs).

Expected Program Results:

- Participants will demonstrate a substantive, measurable increase in language proficiency, verified through testing.
- Participants will demonstrate a deeper understanding of the host country's society, institutions, and culture.
- Alumni will continue their foreign language study, apply their linguistic skills in their chosen career fields, and/or participate in other exchanges where the language they have studied is spoken.
- Host country capacity for language study by U.S. students will be increased through teacher training and other means.

Capacity of Administering Organization:
U.S. applicant organizations or consortia must have the necessary capacity in the host country or countries to implement the program either through their own offices or partner institutions. Organizations may demonstrate their direct expertise, or they may partner with other organizations to best respond to the requirements outlined in this NOFO. Organizations that opt to work with subaward arrangements should clearly outline all duties and responsibilities of the partner organization, preferably in the form of sub-award agreements and accompanying budgets.

Organizations or consortia applying for this award must demonstrate their capacity for conducting projects of this nature, focusing on three areas of competency: (1) provision of foreign language instruction programs and provision of educational and cultural activities as outlined in this document; (2) language level-appropriate programming for the target audience; and (3) experience in conducting programs in the proposed host country or countries. Applicant organizations must present a proposal that clearly indicates the building of new and increased institutional language study capacity overseas for these summer institutes.

Annual Planning Meetings:
The award recipient for Component A will be responsible for convening planning meetings for key personnel, all overseas institute directors, and relevant ECA staff. The component A award recipient (s) will be responsible for working with the component B award recipient to implement and fund the meetings.

Institute Information:
Each overseas summer institute for U.S. undergraduate and graduate students should be no fewer than eight weeks in length and should focus on language study, including four to six hours per day of formal and informal language training. Formal classroom language instruction should be no less than a total of 20 hours per week. The award recipient (s) should provide multiple levels (beginning to advanced) of language instruction. If the organization proposes to hold institutes at multiple locations within one country, all levels should be offered at each location. While teaching conversational

vocabulary will be necessary to help students function in their immersion setting, classes should also provide formal instruction in grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation, as well as covering speaking, listening, reading, and writing, including non-Roman alphabets.

The institutes must also include a secondary cultural immersion element designed to reinforce language learning through planned activities designed to teach participants about community life and the culture and history of the host country. The program activities should enhance the participants' understanding of contemporary society, culture, media, political institutions, ethnic diversity, history, and environment of the host country. All these activities should incorporate a language-learning component. At least one of these activities should include an overnight stay in a location outside of the host city.

Institutes can also propose a third element of the program, which will be piloted in a few institutes and will be optional for CLS students, to include a specialized course focused in a specific area of study such as public health, climate change, energy, or economic issues. The course would combine language learning and enhance the participants' understanding of the topical area of study as it relates to the region and/or country the institute is located in. Applicants are encouraged to consider including this optional component in their proposal

The institutes should strive to foster community-engaged language learners. While health and safety concerns must be considered, applicant organizations should propose innovative ideas for participants to be engaged in the host community to the extent possible while using the targeted language.

Staff from the award recipient (s) should be physically present and available to support the participants throughout the institute. Staff roles and responsibilities should be clearly defined and explained to students. Staff in support roles should have sufficient time to dedicate to supporting students to ensure their health, safety, and emotional well-being.

Country and Language Information:

The Bureau reserves the right to make changes in eligible countries, languages, or numbers of proposed participants by language, based on safety and security or other concerns. The final slate of all institute locations is subject to approval by ECA.

Near East and North Africa Region

For Arabic language institutes:
Applicant organizations should describe plans for not less than a total of 133 participants in the Arabic language institutes. Each institute should host no more than 30 students. Class sizes should be between five and seven students. Arabic language instruction should be available for three levels of students: advanced beginning, intermediate, and advanced. Institutes should have a reasonable distribution across all language levels; final decisions will be made in consultation with ECA.

Participants at the advanced-beginning level will have already studied the language formally for at least one year by the start of the CLS institute. Participants at the intermediate/advanced levels will have already studied the language formally for at least two years. The proposed institutes should make explicit accommodation for learners of varying skill levels.

The award recipient should devise an assessment plan for selected students in order to ensure that the appropriate levels of instruction are received.

Classroom instruction should emphasize Modern Standard Arabic with class time devoted also to colloquial Arabic, as appropriate. Students should also gain knowledge of colloquial Arabic through informal study and through interaction with their host community.

Applicant organizations should plan to place students in a country or countries in North Africa, the Middle East, or the Gulf region, with the exception of Iraq, Libya, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Yemen. Applicant organizations should not plan to place students in the West Bank or Gaza. ECA reserves the right to alter locations based on safety and welfare, security, and other factors.

East Asia and Pacific Region

For Chinese (Mandarin) language institutes:
Applicant organizations should describe plans for not less than a total of 118 participants in the Chinese language institutes. Each institute should host no more than 30 students. Class sizes should be between five and seven students. Chinese language instruction should be available for two levels of students: intermediate and advanced. Institutes should have a reasonable distribution across all language levels; final decisions will be made in consultation with ECA.

Participants at the intermediate/advanced levels will have already studied the language formally for at least two years by the start of CLS institute. The proposed institutes should make explicit accommodation for learners of varying skill levels.

The award recipient should devise an assessment plan for selected students in order to ensure that the appropriate levels of instruction are received.

Chinese instruction should be in Mandarin only. Teaching materials used in the program should be available in both simplified and traditional character versions. The Hanyu pinyin romanization system should be used.

Applicant organizations should plan to place students in the People's Republic of China (mainland China) for study. The location of the institute(s) should be in a city other than Beijing in order to maximize language-learning immersion opportunities.

For Indonesian language institutes:

Applicant organizations should describe plans for not less than a total of 24 participants in the Indonesian language institutes. Class sizes should be between five and seven students. Indonesian language instruction should be available for four levels of students: beginning, advanced beginning, intermediate, and advanced. Institutes should have a reasonable distribution across all language levels; final decisions will be made in consultation with ECA.

No prior study of the language is required for participants at the beginning level. Participants at the advanced-beginning level will have already studied the language formally for at least one year by the start of the CLS institute. Participants at the intermediate/advanced levels will have already studied the language formally for at least two years. The proposed institute should make explicit accommodation for learners of varying skill levels.

The award recipient should devise an assessment plan for selected students in order to ensure that the appropriate levels of instruction are received.

Applicant organizations should plan to place students in Indonesia.

For Japanese language institutes:
Applicant organizations should describe plans for not less than a total of 23 participants in the Japanese language institutes. Class sizes should be between five and seven students. Japanese language instruction should be available for two levels of students: intermediate and advanced. Institutes should have a reasonable distribution across all language levels; final decisions will be made in consultation with ECA.

Participants at the intermediate/advanced levels will have already studied the language formally for at least two years by the start of the CLS institute. The proposed institute should make explicit accommodation for learners of varying skill levels.

The award recipient should devise an assessment plan for selected students in order to ensure that the appropriate levels of instruction are received.

Applicant organizations should plan to place students in Japan. The location of the institute(s) should be in a city other than Tokyo in order to maximize language-learning immersion opportunities.

For Korean language institutes:
Applicant organizations should describe plans for not less than a total of 24 participants in the Korean language institutes. Class sizes should be between five and seven students. Korean language instruction should be available for four levels of students: beginning, advanced beginning, intermediate, and advanced. Institutes should have a reasonable distribution across all language levels; final decisions will be made in consultation with ECA.

No prior study of the language is required for participants at the beginning level. Participants at the advanced-beginning level will have already studied the language

formally for at least one year by the start of the CLS institute. Participants at the intermediate/advanced levels will have already studied the language formally for at least two years by the start of the summer program. The proposed institutes should make explicit accommodation for learners of varying skill levels.

The award recipient should devise an assessment plan for selected students in order to ensure that the appropriate levels of instruction are received.

The Hangeul alphabet system should be used.

Applicant organizations should plan to place students in South Korea. Location of the institutes should be in a city other than Seoul in order to maximize language-learning immersion opportunities.

Europe Region

For Russian language institutes:
Applicant organizations should describe plans for not less than a total of 50 participants in the Russian language institutes. Each institute should host no more than 30 students. Class sizes should be between five and seven students. Russian language instruction should be available for two levels of students: intermediate and advanced. Institutes should have a reasonable distribution across all language levels; final decisions will be made in consultation with ECA.

Participants at the intermediate/advanced levels will have already studied the language formally for at least two years by the start of the summer program. The proposed institutes should make explicit accommodation for learners of varying skill levels and prior number of language instruction hours.

The award recipient should devise an assessment plan for selected students in order to ensure that the appropriate levels of instruction are received.

Applicant organizations should plan to place students in Russia. Location of the institutes should be in a city other than Moscow or St. Petersburg in order to maximize language-learning immersion opportunities.

For Turkish language institutes:
Applicant organizations should describe plans for not less than a total of 40 participants in the Turkish language institutes. Each institute should host no more than 20 students. Class size should be between five and seven students. Turkish language instruction should be available for four levels of students: beginning, advanced beginning, intermediate, and advanced. Institutes should have a reasonable distribution across all language levels; final decisions will be made in consultation with ECA.

No prior study of the language is required for participants at the beginning level. Participants at the advanced-beginning level will have already studied the language formally for at least one year by the start of the CLS institute. Participants at the

intermediate/advanced levels will have already studied the language formally for at least two years by the start of the summer program. The proposed institutes should make explicit accommodation for learners of varying skill levels.

The award recipient should devise an assessment plan for selected students in order to ensure that the appropriate levels of instruction are received.

Applicant organizations should plan to place students in Turkey. Location of the institutes should be in a city other than Istanbul in order to maximize language-learning immersion opportunities.

South Central Asia Region

For Indic language institutes:
Applicant organizations should describe plans for not less than a total of 85 participants in the Indic language institutes. Class sizes should be between five and seven students. Instruction should be available for each of these Indic languages: Bangla, Hindi, Punjabi, and Urdu. For these language institutes, not less than 12 students should learn Bangla, not less than 30 Hindi, not less than 12 Punjabi, and not less than 31 Urdu. All Indic language instruction should be available for four levels of students: beginning, advanced beginning, intermediate, and advanced. Institutes should have a reasonable distribution across all language levels; final decisions will be made in consultation with ECA.

No prior study of the language is required for participants at the beginning level. Participants at the advanced-beginning level will have already studied the language formally for at least one year by the start of the CLS institute. Participants at the intermediate/advanced levels will have already studied the language formally for at least two years by the start of the summer program. The proposed institutes should make explicit accommodation for learners of varying skill levels.

The award recipient should devise an assessment plan for selected students in order to ensure that the appropriate levels of instruction are received.

Applicant organizations should plan to place students in Bangladesh (Bangla) and India (Hindi, Punjabi, and Urdu).

For Persian language institutes:
Applicant organizations should describe plans for not less than a total of 33 participants in the Persian language institute(s). Class sizes should be between five and seven students. Persian language instruction should be available for three levels of students: advanced beginning, intermediate, and advanced. Institutes should have a reasonable distribution across all language levels; final decisions will be made in consultation with ECA.

Participants at the advanced-beginning level will have already studied the language formally for at least one year by the start of the CLS institute. Participants at the intermediate/advanced levels will have already studied the language formally for at least

two years by the start of the summer program. The proposed institutes should make explicit accommodation for learners of varying skill levels.

The award recipient should devise an assessment plan for selected students in order to ensure that the appropriate levels of instruction are received. The organization should also provide a plan for supporting students who do not perform at the level at which they tested and are placed.

Although the Persian institute will not be located in Iran, classroom instruction should emphasize Farsi, with class time devoted also to the local Persian dialect, as appropriate. Students should also gain knowledge of the local Persian dialect through informal study and through interaction with their host community.

Applicant organizations should plan to place students in a site outside of Iran for the study of Persian. The location must be a country in which Persian is predominantly spoken.

Sub-Saharan Africa Region:
For Swahili language institutes:
Applicant organizations should describe plans for not less than a total of 20 participants in the Swahili language institutes. Class sizes should be between five and seven students. Swahili language instruction should be available for four levels of students: beginning, advanced beginning, intermediate, and advanced. Institutes should have a reasonable distribution across all language levels; final decisions will be made in consultation with ECA.

No prior study of the language is required for participants at the beginning level. Participants at the advanced-beginning level will have already studied the language formally for at least one year by the start of the CLS institute. Participants at the intermediate/advanced levels will have already studied the language formally for at least two years by the start of the summer program. The proposed institutes should make explicit accommodation for learners of varying skill levels.

The award recipient should devise an assessment plan for selected students in order to ensure that the appropriate levels of instruction are received.

Applicant organizations should plan to place students in Tanzania. ECA reserves the right to alter locations based on safety and welfare, security, and other factors.

Orientations:
Award recipient (s) will organize substantive, in-person and virtual, pre-departure orientations for all participants, which will focus on program policies and information, as well as health and safety. The in-person orientations must take place in Washington, DC. Comprehensive information packets should be provided, preferably online, well in advance of the orientation to all participants. A sample of the contents of these packets should be provided and be labeled appropriately.

Award recipient (s) must also organize a substantive orientation for participants on arrival in the host country. The award recipient (s) should work in consultation with ECA and the U.S. Embassy in the host country to arrange an in-country security briefing to be conducted by the Embassy's Regional Security Officer.

At the end of each language program, the award recipient (s) will organize an in-country closing workshop for the students prior to departure from their host country, which will focus on summarizing the experience, completing an evaluation, language testing, developing plans for activities at home, and preparing for re-entry.

Project Activities:
Describe in detail the major components of the program, including project planning; the host venues; orientations (U.S. and overseas); assessment and testing; language instruction; educational enrichment activities; cultural activities; participant monitoring; and logistics. The applicant organization should propose a plan to provide academic credit to participants on successful completion of the CLS Program.

Assessment and Testing:
Standardized pre- and post-institute testing should be done to determine participants' language proficiency and progress.

Pre- and post-testing should measure the student's advancement in language learning. The proposed testing mechanism must be complementary to the InterAgency Language Roundtable (ILR) scale. ECA will work with the award recipient (s) to develop and implement an instrument to measure students' increased language proficiency due to participation in this program. The data should be analyzed and reported by the award recipient (s) to ECA for the program, disaggregated by institute.

Execution of Alumni Activities:
Alumni activities are an important part of ECA's academic exchange programs. Alumni programming in the form of career-focused networking events and webinars provides critical program follow-on and maximizes and extends the benefit of the participants' program. Applicant organizations will work in coordination with the recipient of Component A to implement alumni activities and provide relevant data and reports of outcomes of alumni activities. All applicant organizations must indicate a designated staff member to oversee alumni activities. Please refer to the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) and Project Objectives Goals Implementation (POGI) for additional guidance on alumni outreach and follow-on engagement.

Applicant organizations are strongly urged to outline how they will creatively organize and financially support alumni activities at a minimal cost to ECA.

Funding:

Award funding for Component A involving recruitment and selection will cover costs associated with this component, not exceeding $400,000 for the base year. Award funding for Component B involving program administration and implementation of the

institutes will support costs including testing, orientation, travel, tuition and maintenance costs, educational enhancements, cultural and social activities, health benefits coverage, alumni activities, and administrative costs. This element should not exceed $8,600,000 in total for the base year. Average participant costs per language group should not exceed $15,600 (includes program and administrative costs).

In a cooperative agreement, ECA/A/S/Q is substantially involved in program activities above and beyond routine monitoring. These activities and the roles and responsibilities of the Department and your organization are outlined in the attached POGI.

Proposal narratives should include a brief commitment to implement the program for the base year, plus two additional non-competitive continuations (formerly referred to as option years), pending successful performance and the availability of funds. The narrative should focus on details specific to the implementation of the base year program, with the understanding that the program design, duration and participant numbers would be similar when/if the subsequent two non-competitive continuations are exercised. ECA will perform an annual performance evaluation/review to determine if a non-competitive continuation will be exercised. Satisfactory performance and the availability of funds is a condition of continued administration of the program and execution of all non-competitive continuations.

B. Federal Award Information:

Component A: Pre- and Post-Program Administration:
Type of Award: Cooperative Agreement**.** ECA's level of involvement in this program is listed under A. Program Description above.
Fiscal Year Funds: 2016– base year, $400,000, pending the availability of FY 2016 funds; 2017 – non-competitive continuation-one, $4000,000, pending successful performance and availability of funding; 2018 – non-competitive continuation- two, $400,000, pending successful performance and availability of funds.
Approximate Total Funding: $1,200,000
This figure represents base year plus two Non-Competitive Continuation years, pending successful performance and the availability of funds.
Approximate Number of Awards: 1
Floor of Award Range: None
Ceiling of Award Range: $400,000
Approximate Average Award: $400,000
Anticipated Award Date: Pending the availability of FY 2016 funds, October 1, 2015
Anticipated Project Completion Date: March 31, 2020
This date reflects the anticipated duration of the award – one base year plus two non-competitive continuation years.
Additional Information:

A *Cooperative agreement(s) will be awarded for a period of 18 months (base year) with Non-Competitive Continuations(formerly referred to as option years) for two additional 18 month periods (non-competitive continuation years one and two). ECA will notify*

the recipient of our intention to exercise or not to exercise a Non-Competitive Continuation at least 90 days in advance of expiration of the current year after an internal evaluation of the recipient's performance. The decision to exercise a Non-Competitive Continuation will depend both on the satisfactory performance of the recipient and the availability of funds.

Component B: Implementation of Institutes and Alumni Activities:
Type of Award: Cooperative Agreement**.** ECA's level of involvement in this program is listed under A. Program Description above.
Fiscal Year Funds: 2016– base year, $8,600,000, pending the availability of FY 2016 funds; 2017 – non-competitive continuation-one, $8,600,000, pending successful performance and availability of funding; 2018 – non-competitive continuation- two, $8,600,000, pending successful performance and availability of funds.
Approximate Total Funding: $25,800,000
This figure represents base year plus two Non-Competitive Continuation years, pending successful performance and the availability of funds.
Approximate Number of Awards: 1 or more
Floor of Award Range: None
Ceiling of Award Range: $8,600,000
Approximate Average Award: $8,600,000
Anticipated Award Date: Pending the availability of FY 2016 funds, October 1, 2015
Anticipated Project Completion Date: March 31, 2020
This date reflects the anticipated duration of the award – one base year plus two non-competitive continuation years.
Additional Information:

A *Cooperative agreement(s) will be awarded for a period of 18 months (base year) with Non-Competitive Continuations(formerly referred to as option years) for two additional 18 month periods (non-competitive continuation years one and two). ECA will notify the recipient of our intention to exercise or not to exercise a Non-Competitive Continuation at least 90 days in advance of expiration of the current year after an internal evaluation of the recipient's performance. The decision to exercise a Non-Competitive Continuation will depend both on the satisfactory performance of the recipient and the availability of funds.*

C.)   Eligibility Information:

C.1. Eligible applicants: Applications may be submitted by U.S. public and private non-profit organizations and consortia meeting the provisions described in Internal Revenue Code section 26 USC 501(c)(3).

C.2. Cost Sharing or Matching Funds: There is no minimum or maximum percentage required for this competition. However, the Bureau encourages applicants to provide maximum levels of cost sharing and funding in support of its programs.

When cost sharing is offered, it is understood and agreed that the applicant must provide the amount of cost sharing as stipulated in its proposal and later included in an approved agreement. Cost sharing may be in the form of allowable direct or indirect costs. For accountability, you must maintain written records to support all costs which are claimed as your contribution, as well as costs to be paid by the Federal government. Such records are subject to audit. The basis for determining the value of cash and in-kind contributions must be in accordance with the Office of Management and Budget's Circular 2 CFR Parts 200 and 600, entitled the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards. In the event you do not provide the minimum amount of cost sharing as stipulated in the approved budget, ECA's contribution will be reduced in like proportion.

C.3. Other Eligibility Requirements:

Bureau grant guidelines require that organizations with less than four years experience in conducting international exchanges be limited to $130,000 in Bureau funding. ECA anticipates awarding two or more cooperative agreement awards in an amount over $130,000 to support program and administrative costs required to implement this exchange program. Therefore, organizations with less than four years experience in conducting international exchanges are ineligible to apply under this competition. The Bureau encourages applicants to provide maximum levels of cost sharing and funding in support of its programs.

D.) Application and Submission Information:

Note: Please read the complete announcement before sending inquiries or submitting proposals. Once the NOFO deadline has passed, Bureau staff may not discuss this competition with applicants until the proposal review process has been completed.

D.1 Contact Information to Request an Application Package:
Please contact the Office of Global Educational Programs (ECA/A/S/Q) SA-5, Room 4-Y16, U.S. Department of State, 2200 C Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20037, Telephone (202) 632-9451, Fax (202) 632-9451, WoodsAN@state.gov to request a Solicitation Package.

The Solicitation Package contains the Proposal Submission
Instruction (PSI) document which consists of required application forms, and standard guidelines for proposal preparation.

It also contains the Project Objectives, Goals and Implementation (POGI) document, which provides specific information, award criteria and budget instructions tailored to this competition.

Please specify Bureau Program Officer Angela Woods and refer to the Funding Opportunity Number located at the top of this announcement on all other inquiries and correspondence.

D.2.   To Download a Solicitation Package Via Internet:
The entire Solicitation Package may be downloaded from the Bureau's website at
http://eca.state.gov/organizational-funding or from the Grants.gov website at
http://www.grants.gov.

Please read all information before downloading.

D.2a.   Content and Form of Submission: Applicants must follow all instructions in the
Solicitation Package. The application should be submitted per the instructions under
D.3p. "Application Deadline and Method of Submission" section below.

D.3a.   You are required to have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number to apply for a
grant or cooperative agreement from the U.S. Government. This number is a nine-digit
identification number, which uniquely identifies business entities. Obtaining a UEI
number is easy and there is no charge. To obtain a UEI number, access
http://www.dnb.com or call 1-866-705-5711. Please ensure that your UEI (DUNS)
number is included in the appropriate box of the SF – 424 which is part of the formal
application package.

D.3b.   All proposals must contain an executive summary, proposal narrative and budget.

Please Refer to the Solicitation Package. It contains the mandatory Proposal Submission
Instructions (PSI) document and the Project Objectives, Goals and Implementation
(POGI) document for additional formatting and technical requirements.

D.3c. All federal award applicants must be registered in the System for Award
Management (SAM) database in order to submit a proposal in response to an open
competition on Grants.gov.

All federal award recipients must maintain current registrations in the SAM database.
Recipients must maintain accurate and up-to-date information in www.SAM.gov until all
program and financial activity and reporting have been completed. Recipients must
review and update the information at least annually after the initial registration and more
frequently if required information changes or another award is granted. Failure to
register in SAM will render applicants ineligible to receive funding.

D.3d.   You must have nonprofit status with the IRS at the time of application. **Please
note:** Effective January 7, 2009, all applicants for ECA federal assistance awards must
include in their application the names of directors and/or senior executives (current
officers, trustees, and key employees, regardless of amount of compensation). In
fulfilling this requirement, applicants must submit information in one of the following
ways:

1) Those who file Internal Revenue Service Form 990, "Return of Organization Exempt From Income Tax," must include a copy of relevant portions of this form.

2) Those who do not file IRS Form 990 must submit information above in the format of their choice.

D.3e.   In addition to final program reporting requirements, award recipients will also be required to submit a one-page document, derived from their program reports, listing and describing their grant activities. For award recipients, the names of directors and/or senior executives (current officers, trustees, and key employees), as well as the one- page description of grant activities, will be transmitted by the State Department to OMB, along with other information required by the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA), and will be made available to the public by the Office of Management and Budget on its USASpending.gov website as part of ECA's FFATA reporting requirements.

D.3f.   If your organization is a private nonprofit which has not received a grant or cooperative agreement from ECA in the past three years, or if your organization received nonprofit status from the IRS within the past four years, you must submit the necessary documentation to verify nonprofit status as directed in the PSI document. Failure to do so will cause your proposal to be declared technically ineligible.

D.3g. **All ECA awards recipient organizations** must be registered with GrantSolutions by accessing www.GrantSolutions.gov. To register as a first time user of GrantSolutions, please scroll to the bottom of the home page and click "Getting Started-Request a User Account" at http://home.grantsolutions.gov/home/home/customer-support/getting-started/. Organizations that have previously used GrantSolutions do not need to register again. If the organization is not able to access the system, please contact GrantSolutions.gov Help Desk for help in gaining access.

Support for Grantee Organizations is available from 8 AM – 6 PM EST, Monday – Friday and can be reached at help@grantsolutions.gov or 1-866-577-0771.

Please take into consideration the following information when preparing your proposal narrative:

FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES ONLY:

D.3h. **ADHERENCE TO ALL REGULATIONS GOVERNING THE J VISA**

The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs places critically important emphases on the security and proper administration of the Exchange Visitor (J visa) Programs and adherence by award recipients and sponsors to all regulations governing the J visa. A

copy of the complete regulations governing the administration of Exchange Visitor (J) programs is available at http://j1visa.state.gov or from:

Office of Designation, Private Sector Programs Division
U.S. Department of State
SA-44, Suite 668
301 4th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20547

Please refer to Solicitation Package for further information.

D.3i. **Diversity, Freedom and Democracy Guidelines**

Pursuant to the Bureau's authorizing legislation, programs must maintain a non-political character and should be balanced and representative of the diversity of political, social and cultural life in the United States and abroad. "Diversity" should be interpreted in the broadest sense and encompass differences including race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, geographic location, socio-economic status, disability, sexual orientation or gender identity. Proposals should demonstrate how diversity will enhance the program's goals and objectives and the participants' exchange experience. Please refer to the review criteria under the 'Support of Diversity' section of this document as well as the DIVERSITY, FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY section in the "Proposal Submission Instructions" document for specific suggestions on incorporating diversity into the total proposal.

Public Law 104-319 provides that "in carrying out programs of educational and cultural exchange in countries whose people do not fully enjoy freedom and democracy," the Bureau "shall take appropriate steps to provide opportunities for participation in such programs to human rights and democracy leaders of such countries." Public Law 106 - 113 requires that the governments of the countries described above do not have inappropriate influence in the selection process. Proposals should reflect advancement of these goals in their program contents, to the full extent deemed feasible.

D.3j. **Program Monitoring and Evaluation**

Proposals must include a plan to monitor and evaluate the project's success, both as the activities unfold and at the end of the program. The Bureau recommends that your proposal include a draft survey questionnaire or other technique plus a description of a methodology to use to link outcomes to original project objectives. The Bureau expects that the recipient organization will track participants or partners and be able to respond to key evaluation questions, including satisfaction with the program, learning as a result of the program, changes in behavior as a result of the program, and effects of the program on institutions (institutions in which participants work or partner institutions). The evaluation plan should include indicators that measure gains in mutual understanding as well as substantive knowledge.

Successful monitoring and evaluation depend heavily on setting clear goals and outcomes at the outset of a program. Your evaluation plan should include a description of your project's objectives, your anticipated project outcomes, and how and when you intend to measure these outcomes (performance indicators). The more that outcomes are "smart" (specific, measurable, attainable, results-oriented, and placed in a reasonable time frame), the easier it will be to conduct the evaluation. You should also show how your project objectives link to the goals of the program described in this NOFO.

Your monitoring and evaluation plan should clearly distinguish between program <u>outputs</u> and <u>outcomes</u>. <u>Outputs</u> are products and services delivered, often stated as an amount. Output information is important to show the scope or size of project activities, but it cannot substitute for information about progress towards outcomes or the results achieved. Examples of outputs include the number of people trained or the number of seminars conducted. <u>Outcomes</u>, in contrast, represent specific results a project is intended to achieve and is usually measured as an extent of change. Findings on outputs and outcomes should both be reported, but the focus should be on outcomes.

We encourage you to assess the following four levels of outcomes, as they relate to the program goals set out in the NOFO (listed here in increasing order of importance):

1. **Participant satisfaction** with the program and exchange experience.
2. **Participant learning**, such as increased knowledge, aptitude, skills, and changed understanding and attitude. Learning includes both substantive (subject-specific) learning and mutual understanding.
3. **Participant behavior**, concrete actions to apply knowledge in work or community; greater participation and responsibility in civic organizations; interpretation and explanation of experiences and new knowledge gained; continued contacts between participants, community members, and others.
4. **Institutional changes**, such as increased collaboration and partnerships, policy reforms, new programming, and organizational improvements.

Please note: Consideration should be given to the appropriate timing of data collection for each level of outcome. For example, satisfaction is usually captured as a short-term outcome, whereas behavior and institutional changes are normally considered longer-term outcomes.

Overall, the quality of your monitoring and evaluation plan will be judged on how well it 1) specifies intended outcomes; 2) gives clear descriptions of how each outcome will be measured; 3) identifies when particular outcomes will be measured; and 4) provides a clear description of the data collection strategies for each outcome (i.e., surveys, interviews, or focus groups). (Please note that evaluation plans that deal only with the first level of outcomes [satisfaction] will be deemed less competitive under the present evaluation criteria.)

Recipient organizations will be required to provide reports analyzing their evaluation findings to the Bureau in their regular program reports. All data collected, including

survey responses and contact information, must be maintained for a minimum of three years and provided to the Bureau upon request.

D.3k.   **Virtual Exchange Component:** ECA welcomes innovative ideas on how organizations can leverage appropriate mobile and/or online technologies to maintain engagement among exchange participants, encourage project collaboration and widen participation in the overall project to a broader audience. ECA strongly encourages organizations submitting proposals in response to this solicitation to suggest one or more virtual exchange components to complement the in-person exchange. The virtual exchange component(s) could come before, during and/or after the physical exchange. The objective for the virtual exchange component(s), defined as technology-enabled, sustainable, people-to-people, cross-cultural exchanges, is to augment the impact of the in-person exchange described in this solicitation. ECA encourages organizations to propose virtual exchange ideas that take advantage of ECA's existing web and social networking platforms, including our International Exchange Alumni space. Virtual exchange components would be coordinated with and approved by the ECA program office and U.S. missions abroad on a project by project basis.

D.3l.   **Communications Guidance for ECA Grant Recipients:** All ECA Grant Recipients must adhere to the requirements in ECA's Communications Guidance on the creation of program branding and attribution, websites, social media, and press.

D.3m. Please take the following information into consideration when preparing your budget:

D.3n.   Applicants must submit SF-424A – "Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs" along with a comprehensive budget for the entire program. Budget requests for administration of both Component A and B may not exceed $9,000,000 for the base year.   There must be a summary budget as well as breakdowns reflecting both administrative and program budgets. Applicants may provide separate sub-budgets for each program component, phase, location, or activity to provide clarification. Applicants should also provide copies of any sub-award agreements that would be implemented under terms of this award.

For competitions that will be renewed through a Non-Competitive Continuation (formerly referred to as Option Years) applicants must submit:
- the SF-424A which must include the budget request amount for the base-year of the program;
- a detailed proposal narrative and budget for the base year of funding (Please refer to the Proposal Submission Instruction Document (PSI) for general budget guidance.).   The narrative should also include a brief commitment to implement the program for the base year, plus two additional non-competitive continuation years, pending successful program performance and availability of funds; and
- an abbreviated/estimated summary budget presenting the total projected administrative and program costs for the anticipated total duration of programming (base year, plus two non-competitive continuation years).

To exercise the Non-Competitive Continuation (formerly referred to as Option Years) mechanism the recipient will be required to submit:
1. timely quarterly performance and financial reports;
2. a request in writing to ECA at least 90 days in advance of the expiration of the current program year;
3. a summary budget that projects program expenses through the end of the current year;
4. a detailed budget outlining both administrative and program expenses for the requested non-competitive continuation year; and
5. a brief narrative to support the continuation of the award.

The ECA Grants Officer and Program Officer will:

1.) closely monitor the recipient's performance through site visits, desk audits, mandatory quarterly performance and financial reports, consultations, and other forms of communication and dialogue before exercising additional non-competitive continuations. (Additional details regarding monitoring and oversight of the program by ECA representatives will be provided at the time the base-year award is made.)

2.) review and evaluate all mandatory quarterly program and financial reports;
- All program and financial reporting requirements must be current and up-to-date before the Bureau will   exercise additional non-competitive continuations.
- Any/all concerns, issues, or modifications requested by the Grants Officer or Program Officer to the original program design or method of implementation must be responded to in writing.
- The ECA Grants Officer and Program Officer will review and advise of ECA's approval or disapproval of the response before issuing subsequent non-competitive continuations.

3.) Prior Grants Officer approval is required to carry forward an unobligated balance from a prior funding period to the subsequent funding period. If the Grants Officer determines that some or all of the unobligated funds are not necessary to perform the program activity, the Grants Officer may decline the Recipient's request to carry forward the unobligated balance.

The Grants Officer may, at their discretion, use the unobligated balance to reduce or offset future funding for a subsequent funding period. An unobligated balance at the end of a funding period is not sufficient justification to carry forward funds. A final determination and approval to carry forward any funds will be communicated via a cost amendment with adjustment, if any, to new obligation amounts.

    i.   The request to carry forward an unobligated balance must include:

        a.   A brief narrative why funds remain unobligated and how the unobligated funds will be used to complete the previously approved goals and objectives of the program; and,

   b. A detailed budget that reflects the amount of unobligated funds to date, and anticipated expenditures in the subsequent period of performance for all cost categories under the authorized budget.

D.3o. Allowable costs for the program and additional budget guidance are outlined in detail in the POGI document.

Please refer to the Solicitation Package for complete budget guidelines and formatting instructions.

D.3p. Application Deadline and Method of Submission:
Application Deadline Date: Friday, June 26, 2015
Method of Submission:
Applications may only be submitted electronically
through Grants.gov (http://www.grants.gov). Complete solicitation packages are available at Grants.gov in the "Find" portion of the system.

PLEASE NOTE: ECA bears no responsibility for applicant timeliness of submission or data errors resulting from transmission or conversion processes for proposals submitted via Grants.gov.

Please follow the instructions available in the 'Get Started' portion of the site (http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/apply-for-grants.html).

Several of the steps in the Grants.gov registration process could take several weeks. Therefore, applicants should check with appropriate staff within their organizations immediately after reviewing this NOFO to confirm or determine their registration status with Grants.gov.

Once registered, the amount of time it can take to upload an application will vary depending on a variety of factors including the size of the application and the speed of your internet connection. In addition, validation of an electronic submission via Grants.gov can take up to two business days.

Therefore, we strongly recommend that you not wait until the application deadline to begin the submission process through Grants.gov.

The Grants.gov website includes extensive information on all phases/aspects of the Grants.gov process, including an extensive section on frequently asked questions, located under the "For Applicants" section of the website. ECA strongly recommends that all potential applicants review thoroughly the Grants.gov website, well in advance of submitting a proposal through the Grants.gov system.

Direct all questions regarding Grants.gov registration and submission to:

Grants.gov Customer Support
Contact Center Phone: 800 -518-4726
Business Hours: 24 hours a day, 7 days a week; closed on federal holidays
Email: support@grants.gov

Applicants have until midnight (12:00 a.m.), Washington, DC time of the closing date to ensure that their entire application has been uploaded to the Grants.gov site. There are no exceptions to the above deadline. Applications uploaded to the site after midnight of the application deadline date will be automatically rejected by the Grants.gov system, and will be technically ineligible.

Please refer to the Grants.gov website, for definitions of various "application statuses" and the difference between a submission receipt and a submission validation. Applicants will receive a validation e-mail from Grants.gov upon the successful submission of an application. Again, validation of an electronic submission via Grants.gov can take up to two business days. Therefore, we strongly recommend that you not wait until the application deadline to begin the submission process through Grants.gov. ECA will not notify you upon receipt of electronic applications.

It is the responsibility of all applicants submitting proposals via the Grants.gov web portal to ensure that proposals have been received by Grants.gov in their entirety, and ECA bears no responsibility for data errors resulting from transmission or conversion processes.

D.3q. Intergovernmental Review of Applications: Executive Order 12372 does not apply to this program.

E. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

The Bureau will review all proposals for technical eligibility. Proposals will be deemed ineligible if they do not fully adhere to the guidelines stated herein and in the Solicitation Package. All eligible proposals will be reviewed by the program office, as well as the Public Diplomacy section overseas and State Department regional bureaus, where appropriate. Eligible proposals will be subject to compliance with Federal and Bureau regulations and guidelines and forwarded to Bureau grant panels for advisory review. Proposals may also be reviewed by the Office of the Legal Adviser or by other Department elements. All awards will be assessed for risk prior to their issuance. Final funding decisions are at the discretion of the Department of State's Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs. Final technical authority for assistance awards resides with the Bureau's Grants Officer.

E.1. REVIEW CRITERIA

Technically eligible applications will be competitively reviewed according to the criteria stated below. These criteria are not rank ordered and all carry equal weight in the proposal evaluation:

1. Quality of the program idea: Proposals should exhibit originality, substance, precision, and relevance to the Bureau's mission. Proposals should demonstrate how students would be monitored, and also how they will be supported as alumni. If applying for Component A, proposals should show how students would be recruited and selected.

2. Program planning: Detailed agenda and relevant work plan should demonstrate substantive undertakings and logistical capacity. Agenda and plan should adhere to the program overview and guidelines described above. The substance of the instruction and the exchange activities should be described in detail and included as an attachment.

3. Ability to achieve program objectives: Objectives should be reasonable, feasible, and flexible. Proposals should clearly demonstrate how the institution will meet the program's objectives and plan. The responsibilities of partner organizations will be clearly delineated.

4. Multiplier effect/impact: Proposed programs should strengthen long-term mutual understanding, including maximum sharing of information and establishment of long-term institutional and individual linkages.

5. Support of Diversity: Proposals should show substantive support of the Bureau's policy on diversity. Proposals should demonstrate how diversity will be achieved in the different aspects of program administration and of program design, content and implementation, including individual grantee/participant recruitment, selection and placement. It is important that proposals have a clearly articulated diversity plan and not simply express general support for the concept of diversity.

6. Institutional Capacity and Institution's Record/Ability: Applicant organizations should demonstrate knowledge of each country's educational environment and the capacity for hosting this language institute. Proposals should include detailed information about the applicant organization's capacity in the United States and about in-country support for the program, including descriptions of experienced personnel who will implement it. Proposed personnel and institutional resources should be adequate and appropriate to achieve the project's goals. Proposals should demonstrate an institutional record of successful exchange programs, including responsible fiscal management and full compliance with all reporting requirements for past Bureau awards (grants or cooperative agreements) as determined by Bureau Grants Staff. The Bureau will consider the past performance of prior recipients and the demonstrated potential of new applicants.

8. Follow-on/Alumni Activities: Proposals should provide a plan for continued follow-on activity (without Bureau support) ensuring that Bureau supported programs are not isolated events. Proposals should provide a plan for continued contact with returnees to ensure that they are tracked over time, utilized and/or organized as alumni, and provided

opportunities to reinforce the knowledge and skills they acquired on the exchange and share them with others. Proposals should provide a strategy for maximizing the opportunities for alumni to further their study of the language and culture of the host country, presenting plans that are within the context of the grant (with Bureau support) and after its completion (without the Bureau's financial support). Please refer to the POGI for additional guidance on alumni outreach and follow-on engagement.

9. Project Evaluation: Proposals should include a plan and methodology to evaluate the program's successes and challenges, both as the activities unfold and at the end of the program. The evaluation plan should show a clear link between program objectives and expected outcomes, and should include a description of performance indicators and measurement tools. Applicant organizations will indicate their willingness to submit periodic progress reports in accordance with the program office's expectations. The final project evaluation should provide qualitative and quantitative data about the project's influence on the participants' long-term language-learning goals. A draft survey questionnaire or other technique plus description of a methodology to use to link outcomes to original project objectives are recommended.

10. Cost-effectiveness: The overhead and administrative components of the proposal, including salaries and honoraria, should be kept as low as possible. While per participant costs lower than the stated average of $15,600 (includes program and administrative costs) will be favorably viewed under this review criterion, all figures should be realistic. All other items should be necessary and appropriate. Proposals should demonstrate a quality, cost-effective program.

11. Cost-sharing: Proposals should maximize cost-sharing through other private sector support as well as institutional direct funding contributions.

F.)   Federal Award Administration Information

F.1. **Award Notices**:
Final awards cannot be made until funds have been appropriated by Congress, allocated and committed through internal Bureau procedures. Successful applicants will receive an Federal Assistance Award (FAA) from the Bureau's Grants Office. The FAA and the original proposal with subsequent modifications (if applicable) shall be the only binding authorizing document between the recipient and the U.S. Government. The FAA will be signed by an authorized Grants Officer, and transmitted to the recipient's responsible officer identified in the application.

Unsuccessful applicants will receive notification of the results of the application review from the ECA program office coordinating this competition.

F.2   **Administrative and National Policy Requirements**:
Terms and Conditions for the Administration of ECA agreements include the following:

Office of Management and Budget's Circular 2 CFR Parts 200 and 600, entitled the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (Effective December 26, 2014, replacing the previous circulars).

For a copy of the OMB circular cited, please contact the U.S. Government Publishing Office or download from the www.ecfr.gov website.

Please reference the following websites for additional information:

http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants.
https://www.statebuy.state.gov/fa/pages/home.aspx

F.3. Reporting Requirements: You must provide ECA with an electronic copy of the following required reports:

Mandatory:

1.) Additional performance reports shall not be required more frequently than quarterly or, less frequently than annually. Annual reports shall be due 90 calendar days after the grant year; quarterly or semi-annual reports shall be due 30 days after the reporting period. (Frequency of these reports will be determined by the Grants Officer and Program Officer). The first page of the Performance Progress Report form (SF-PPR) must be submitted with all programmatic reports and can be found here: http://aopefa.a.state.gov/content.asp?content_id=20&menu_id=68 .   The complete report and supporting documentation must be uploaded by the Recipient as a *Grant Note* under the corresponding record for this Agreement in GrantSolutions.gov. For assistance, please contact the GrantSolutions Help Desk at 1 (866) 577-0771 (toll free for US callers) or by email at help@grantsolutions.gov. The Federal Financial Report (FFR SF-425/SF-425a) must be submitted through the Payment Management System (PMS). The electronic version of the FFR can be accessed at: http://www.dpm.psc.gov/. Once a financial report has been approved by the Department, the Recipient must upload the approved report to GrantSolutions.gov, in the same manner specified for the programmatic reports. Failure to comply with these reporting requirements may jeopardize the Recipient's eligibility for future Agreements.

2.) A SF-PPR, "Performance Progress Report" Cover Sheet must be submitted with all program performance reports.

3.) A final program and financial report no more than 90 days after the expiration or termination of the award;

4.) A concise, one-page final program report summarizing program outcomes no more than 90 days after the expiration of the award. This report should be e-mailed to: FFATAECA@state.gov. This one-page report will be transmitted to OMB, and be made available to the public via OMB's USAspending.gov website - as part of ECA's Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) reporting requirements.

5.) Because the Competition will allow for the exercise of Non-Competitive Continuations (NCC) (formerly referred to as Option Years), applicants must

be placed on a mandatory quarterly program and financial reporting cycle. The due dates for these reports will be included in the final assistance award document. The program and financial reports must demonstrate substantial progress by addressing progress towards the original approved goals and objectives, relative activities and events, and supporting fiscal data. The reports will be reviewed by both the assigned Grant Officer and Program Officer.

Award recipients will be required to provide reports analyzing their evaluation findings to the Bureau in their regular program reports. (Please refer to D. Application and Submission Instructions above for D.3j. Program Monitoring and Evaluation information.

All data collected, including survey responses and contact information, must be maintained for a minimum of three years and provided to the Bureau upon request.

F.4. Program Data Requirements:
 Award recipients will be required to maintain specific data on program participants and activities in an electronically accessible database format that can be shared with the Bureau as required. At a minimum, the data must include the following:

1) Name, address, contact information and biographic sketch of all persons who travel internationally on funds provided by the agreement or who benefit from the award funding but do not travel.
2)

    2) Itineraries of international and domestic travel, providing dates of travel and cities in which any exchange experiences take place. Final schedules for in-country and U.S. activities must be received by the ECA Program Officer at least one week prior to the official opening of the activity.

G.   Agency Contacts

For questions about this announcement, contact: Angela Woods, U.S. Department of State, Office of Global Educational Programs (ECA/A/S/Q) SA-5, 4th floor, 2200 C Street, NW, Washington, DC 20037, Telephone (202) 632-9451, Fax (202) 632-6489, E-mail: WoodsAN@state.gov.

All correspondence with the Bureau concerning this NOFO should reference the title and funding opportunity number listed at the top of this solicitation.

Please read the complete announcement before sending inquiries or submitting proposals. Once the NOFO deadline has passed, Bureau staff may not discuss this competition with applicants until the proposal review process has been completed.

H. Other Information:

Notice:
The terms and conditions published in this NOFO are binding and may not be modified by any Bureau representative. Explanatory information provided by the Bureau that contradicts published language will not be binding. Issuance of the NOFO does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the Government. The Bureau reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets in accordance with the needs of the program and the availability of funds. Awards made will be subject to periodic reporting and evaluation requirements per section F3. Reporting Requirements above.

Kelly Keiderling   May 5, 2015
Acting Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs
U.S. Department of State